



County of San Diego

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RECEIVED

July 13, 2010

The Honorable Kevin Enright
Presiding Judge, San Diego Superior Court
220 West Broadway
San Diego, CA 92101

JUL 22 2010

SAN DIEGO
COUNTY GRAND JURY

Dear Judge Enright,

On July 13, 2010, the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors approved responses to nine Grand Jury reports that addressed findings and recommendations to the County of San Diego. The Board further directed that these responses be sent to your office. The reports for which responses are attached are titled:

- Ethical Political Practices-Enforcement of Campaign and Lobbying Laws
- Transitional Age Youth: Navigating a Difficult Course to Independent Living
- Homeless in San Diego
- San Diego County Detention Facility Inspection Report
- Proposition 63 Mental Health Services Act
- The Substance Abuse Recovery Management System (SARMS)
- Ethics in Government- Code of Ethics, Internal Control, Fraud Hotlines
- Efficiency in Government-Managed Competition, Outsourcing, Reengineering and Reverse Auction Within San Diego County
- Medical Marijuana in San Diego

The Board is scheduled to consider the County's response to a 10th report titled "Eye Gnats in San Diego County" on August 3, 2010. That response will complete the County's obligations to the 2009-2010 Grand Jury and will be sent to you as soon as Board approval is obtained. If you have any questions, please contact me at (619) 531-5250.

Sincerely,

WALTER F. EKARD

Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment

cc: Board of Supervisors

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
RESPONSE TO 2009/10 GRAND JURY REPORT
“Transitional Age Youth: Navigating a Difficult Course to Independent Living”
Issued May 11, 2010

Finding #01 : Many TAY do not obtain necessary transition training because they are reluctant to volunteer for this training.

Response: Agree.

Finding #02: Sufficient TAY programs are established and supervised by appropriate agencies; however, many of the agencies and departments practice a “silo” type of operation that does not result in maximum cooperation and sharing of information for the greatest benefit for the TAY. A “silo” type operation occurs when an agency or department develops appropriate programs, but the information is not shared with other entities that could utilize the same programs.

Response: Partially Agree. There is a need for additional TAY programs for our youth. Agencies need additional housing options, employment resources and a crisis shelter for those youth who think they can make it on their own and then find themselves homeless and in need of support. It is acknowledged that agencies do need to cooperate and share information in order to benefit Transitional Age Youth.

Finding #03: The funds for TAY programs, which are within the MHSA funding for San Diego County, are within proper audit standards.

Response: Agree.

Finding #04: TAY training should be started at the earliest possible age; some sources suggest at age five or younger.

Response: Partially Agree. For youth who enter the system as young children, it is the goal of the Health and Human Services to ensure that they achieve permanency long before they need independent living skills for transitioning to self-sufficiency.

Finding #05: Fifty vacant beds each month at the Academy is cause for concern as many more TAY could participate in the program.

Response: Agree. Efforts are underway to recruit additional foster youth to San Pasqual Academy. See County response to Recommendation 10-17.

Finding # 06: In order to maximize Academy enrollment, additional site tours should be scheduled, and consideration by various TAY agencies should be given to overnight and weekend visits by eligible foster youth and their siblings.

Response: Agree. See County response to Recommendation 10-17.

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the Director of the Health and Human Services Agency, the superintendent of the San Diego County Office of Education and the San Diego County Chief Probation Officer:

Recommendation 10-15: Direct the appropriate agencies/departments to establish policies and procedures that facilitate the sharing of Transitional Age Youth information.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. Although there are always additional opportunities for increased partnership/collaboration, the following activities promote the sharing of TAY information:

Monthly Meetings

- Independent Living Skills Collaborative
- Transitional Housing Program Plus Collaborative
- Group Home/Foster Family Agency Meeting
- Children's System of Care Transitional Aged Youth Workgroup

Resources are also shared via the ILS Website, 90 Day Transition Plan, Transitional Independent Living Plan, National Youth in Transition Database, and Quarterly Exit Outcomes Data Reports. In addition, a newly revised Transition Age Youth Mental Health Resource Directory was recently distributed to all Child Welfare Managers and their staff who work with transitional age youth.

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the Director of the Health and Human Services Agency and the San Diego County Chief Probation Officer:

Recommendation 10-16: Require case social workers and probation officers to be more proactive in assisting foster youths in making positive decisions for volunteering to participate in Transitional Age Youth programs.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. Social workers are required to discuss Independent Living Skills (ILS) with each youth at the age of 15.5 and refer them to the Child Welfare Independent Living Skills unit. Although ILS participation is voluntary, Social Workers address this issue for each youth in updates to the court every six months.

The Probation Department requires that youth are referred to the Independent Living Skills (ILS) Unit with the Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) for participation in ILS programming. A Probation Officer is assigned to the ILS Unit to act as a liaison between both systems and provide follow-up with the Probation Officer of record regarding ILS issues. A Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) is also required for youth at the age of 16, and is reviewed with the youth and revised at six month intervals in concurrence with Court reviews.

The 2009/2010 San Diego County Grand Jury recommends that the Director of the Health and Human Services Agency:

Recommendation 10-17: Direct that the staff of the Child Welfare Services identify potential applicants for San Pasqual Academy and refer the qualified youth to the San Pasqual Academy staff.

Response: This recommendation has been implemented. The Health and Human Services Agency has made increasing the population of the Academy a priority. Efforts include reviewing youth who are in out-of-home placement, ages 12-18, as well as all siblings of youth currently placed at the Academy to identify potential candidates. Tours are offered to all interested youth

on a daily basis. In addition, the Agency has explored the opportunity for placement of youth residing in other counties and continues to work with Riverside, Imperial, and San Bernardino Counties to identify potential candidates. Some other efforts include:

- Review of the Residential Services Foster Family Agency waiting list
- San Pasqual Academy Open House (Hosted by Quentin Jammer in April 2010)
- Monthly meeting with regional social work liaisons to identify appropriate referrals
- Meeting with Teen Units in the regions/program to identify appropriate youth for the Academy

Recommendation 10-18: Direct that the staff of the San Pasqual conduct more on-site visits for eligible foster youth, to include overnight and weekend visits.

Response: This recommendation requires further analysis. There are a number of issues that need to be considered before the County could implement this recommendation. First, the State's Community Care Licensing would need to authorize the overnight visits for youth that ordinarily do not reside at the Academy. Additionally, the County contractor for the Academy, New Alternatives, would need to be consulted regarding the supervision of visiting youth, as well as determining appropriate sleeping arrangements.

Commendation: *The Grand Jury toured the San Pasqual Academy facilities and commends the residential staff, educational staff, and youth in attendance. The overall operation of the Academy provides foster youth a safe, secure environment in which they can achieve a productive education and experience an abundance of "family lifestyle" supported activities. The Academy is a community success story.*

Response: *The Health and Human Services Agency's Child Welfare Service division would like to thank the 2009-2010 Grand Jury for its commendation of San Pasqual Academy and its staff, youth residents and operations.*
